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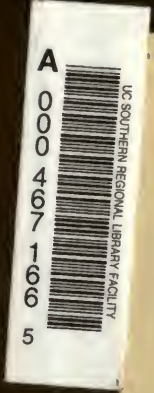

Stephens

Five New Poems

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By

James Stephens.

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CONTENTS.

The River.
The Cow.
Spring.
The Lake.
Evening.

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FIVE POEMS.

THE RIVER.

THERE was a river that rose
in the cool of the morn,
It leaped down the side of the mountain,
and ran through the meadows and corn:
But it came at the last to a cave
by the edge of the sea,
And it fell through the darkness, and
vanished
Forever from me.

I AM sad for the river that fell
through the darkness away;
From the fields full of corn, from the sun,
from the light of the day:
I could weep for the river that danced
in the light of the day,
And sunk through the darkness, and
vanished
Forever away.

THE COW.

COW, Cow,
I and thou
Are looking at each other's eyes:
You are lying on the grass
Eating every time I pass,
And you do not seem to be
Ever in perplexity:
You are good I'm sure, and not
Fit for nothing but the pot:
For your bearing is so kind,
And your quietness so wise:
Cow, Cow,
I and thou
Are looking at each other's eyes.

SPRING.

I CAN see
The buds have come again,
And every tree
Through some dear intercourse of sun and dew,
And thrilling root, and folding earth, anew
Is clad in beauty.

THEY, up to the sun,
As on a breast, are lifting every one
Their baby leaves:
The sparrows underneath the eaves
Are making love:
There is a chatter in the woods above
Where the black crow
Is telling what his sweetheart wants to know—

FOR the sun is shining fair,
And the green is on the tree.
And the wind is everywhere
Whispering so secretly:
You will die unless you do
Find a mate to whisper to.

THE LAKE.

HE could see the little lake
Cuddled on a mountain's arm,
And the rushes were a'shake,
On the margin of the lake.

And the gloom of evening threw
On the surface of the lake,
Just a shadow on the blue
Where the night came creeping through.

THERE was silence all around,
Not a whisper stirred the lake,
And the trees made not a sound
Standing silent in the ground.

Then a moon of beauty swept
One slim finger on the lake,
And the glory of it crept
Past the lilies where they slept,

AND just where a lily flung
It's broad flag upon the lake
Was a dead face pale and young
And the wet hair spread and swung;

And the moon beamed mild and dim
On that dead face in the lake,
Then it grew fierce, wide and grim,
And a mad moon glared at Him.

EVENING.

THE drowsy sun went slowly to his rest
Gathering all his dusty gold again
Into one place:
He did not leave a trace
Upon the sky except one distant stain,
Scarce to be seen, upon the quiet west:
So evening came, and darkness, and the sound
Of moving feet upon the whispering ground.

LIKE timid girls the shades went pacing down
The spreading slopes apparelled soberly
In vestments grey;
And far away
The last red colour faded to a brown,
So faint, so far, the eye could scarce it see:
And then the skirts of evening swung upon
That distant little light, and it was gone.

THE bee sped home, the beetle's wing of horn
Went booming by, the darkness every side
Gathered around
On sky and air and ground;
And all the pliant trees sang far and wide
In cadenced lift of leaves a song of morn:
And then the moon's white circle, faint and thin,
Looked steady on the earth—*there is no sin.*

"Captain Macheath." Reduction of Broadside.

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